



RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Security Challenges and The Role of Opposition Political Parties in Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

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### ARTICLE INFO

Received: Jul 17, 2024

Accepted: Sep 15, 2024

#### Keywords

Democratic Perspective

Insecurity

Insurgency

Kidnapping

Opposition Political Party

Political Party

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### ABSTRACT

Insurgency and insecurity have remained the outcome of the relationship between the ruling and the opposition party in Nigeria. The situation has kept the attention of government diverted to fighting insurgency and insecurity in the society thereby losing focus on the primary task of administration. It also examines the role of opposition parties in creating an atmosphere of insecurity in society and the fight against it. Most times, the efforts of the government in fighting insecurity are met with corruption among members thereby being part of the government's weakness. The study's conclusions were reached through the application of qualitative research techniques and the utilisation of secondary material from internet sources as well as books, journals, and newspapers. The analysis framework for this paper is based on Estonian System Theory. Research has revealed that opposition political parties can employ a variety of tactics to undermine the ruling party and force it from office, having initially served as watchdogs. The opposition party believes that every attempt to remove the ruling party draws them closer to victory. It is therefore concluded that opposition parties have become part of insurgency and insecurity in the state to weaken the ruling government, and drum for their yet-to-come government. The study recommends that the opposition party with the spirit of nation-building should join hands with the leading party in providing security and fighting insurgency for their interest and the general interest of society. The leading party must protect its members and the opposition.

### INTRODUCTION

Insecurity in our society presently has reached its alarming stage in Nigeria. The situation has caused citizens dissatisfaction with the government and has led to many embracing the '*Japa*' syndrome (the practice of going abroad in search of greener pastures. Insecurity on many occasions has been linked to the opposition political parties (Bouchat, 2013; Olowojolu, 2015; Deinibiteim, 2023). The background to the present situation has its evolutionary political features embedded in the crises

(Udoh, E.W, 2015). The party politics played in our country Nigeria today has also kept the opposition party in different types of struggles while the ruling party continues to maintain power, fight the opposition, secure and guard against all strategies of attack such as insurgency, kidnapping, and other similar modes of insecurity as armed robberies, bombing, rituals killings, assassination, Advanced Fee Fraud (419), hacking of internet, bank, media and company account, banditry, militancy, terrorism, homicide, arson.

Insurgency in the country has never been child's play in the country. Many reputable politicians have supported their insurgent group since they believe that their ethnic interests are well represented in the demands of the groups:

During the 1990s and early 2000s, insurgent groups such as the O'dua Peoples' Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and the Arewa Youth Congress (AYC)—all representing the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo—as well as militants in the Niger Delta were oppressed. These groups were engaged in a quest for the legitimacy and acceptance of the Symbols, institutions, and state administrators (Duruji, 2013).

The efforts of the ruling party in providing good governance are heavily distracted by the continuous state of insecurity orchestrated by the opposition party. The activities of opposition parties have amounted to great insecurity that emanated from insurgency and kidnapping and this condition cannot bring any good towards nation-building but insecurity in the nation.

Political parties have remained weak, underdeveloped, and institutionalized are the typical ways of party formation, obtaining or acquiring value, and lasting stability. Ruling political parties have diverted attention towards tackling insurgency in the society which directly or indirectly has the support of the opposition.

In most African nations, post-independence parties in power became domineering and these domineering parties held power till the time of structural destruction by the military regime through a coup d'état.

In Muirhead's opinion (2020) Political parties, though essential to contemporary democracy, were marginalised in normative democratic theory until recently, losing ground to civil society associations, social movements, deliberative experiments, venues for local participatory government, and direct public participation. Parties collaborate with voters to advance their agendas in the main. Nigeria's party system is already fragile and unstable, with no clear signs of democracy solidifying due to godfatherism, intra-party conflict within political parties, ongoing political abuse, and the lack of institutionalisation and personalisation of political parties (Musa et al., 2020). Every organized setting has the power to decide the style of leadership (Abasilim, Gberevbie, & Osibanjo, 2019).

Presently, a political party has been under the control of former men of the military with a command mindset, an action that is a feature known about the military (cited in Danjibo et al, 2018). According to Dode (2010), at least 90% of Nigerian political parties have lost their institutional strength and have only recently begun to establish a minimal social presence. This suggests that Nigerian political parties have not been accountable for bringing people together, serving the needs of the community, or enacting acts that unite the state and the community—all of which are essential components of consolidation democracy.(quoted on page 64 of Musa et al., 2020). Danjiba et al, (2018, p.11) maintain all instruments are sent out into the competition, including promoting problems of ethnoreligious and regional belief. The courage to participate in an election contest is not mainly to offer services but to be in public office to acquire the values for their individual and group engrossment:

A lot of evidence has pointed out that inter-party relations are characterised by different levels of crises. Good relationships with each other and the creation of beneficial agreements that will help in the nations' policies are never features of political parties. The relationships that exist with ruling and opposition parties at the national level are characterized by a lack of trust hatred and disharmony. Looking at the just concluded presidential election of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the major aspirants, Joseph Kabila, and Jean-Pierre Bemba, couldn't personally get involved in the tense election campaign but assigned the duty to their wives who traveled all parts of the country for the initiated style of campaign. Regular talk among ruling and opposition parties is not common during the period of or after the completion of elections. Ruling parties and their leaders are well identified with that attitude of rejecting talks with the opposition on key national policy matters. Some parties in power with their leaders disagree and put together a formal discourse with opposition parties and their leaders during elections (Matlosa, 2007, p.2).

The study examines the causes of insecurity in society as it affects the society. It also examines the role of opposition parties in creating an atmosphere of insecurity in society and the fight against it. The Systems theory is applied in the descriptive analysis of this work.

## CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATIONS

### Nigerian Political System

Nigeria's federal government is divided into three distinct branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. These branches, together with the president, the National Assembly, and the federal courts—which include the Supreme Court, which is acknowledged as the nation's highest court—are all given jurisdiction by the Federal Republic of Nigeria's Constitution.

### Democratic Consolidation

This is an indication that all activities of the Nigerian government are embedded in democratic practice. Since gaining independence, Nigeria's democracy has been brittle and inconsistent. In a diverse culture that the British government once colonised, succeeding administrations have worked to foster a feeling of national cohesion (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2022).

**Insurgency** is a state of revolution orchestrated against an administration that is not regarded as warring (cited in Ukpong-Uma, 2016). Insurgency in society will always fight against authority that is seen as legitimate. According to NATO (2023), insurgents may engage in non-military actions to win over the public, such as giving local people financial assistance or necessities. Additional insurgent actions might involve insider threats stemming from infiltration of the host nation security forces (HNSF), for which assistance with counterintelligence may be required from the HN authorities.

Insurgency is explained as a fight that exists between the authority in charge of the government group and the other authority that is not in government where the group does not make use of all available materials and violence to spoil, redesign, or showcase the roots of different types of politics reformulate or make lasing the background of one or some political aspects (cited in Hassan, 2014). Insurgency in different places takes different dimensions:

Terrorism is a style of insurgency; it is part of decisions taken towards achieving set goals. These goals include bombing, guerilla warfare, and abduction...

has been a set plan for political, economic, or religiously sparked crisis carried in opposition to the government or authority by a discontent group, usually meditated to convince the people (Hassan, 2014, p.10).

In this condition, it becomes difficult for the government in its daily administration as the challenges of insurgency are great distraction and disruption of any government.

**Insecurity** is better understood with a clear picture or meaning of security in any society.

Security is generally seen in every society as part of the constitutional task of the government to protect the fundamental human rights, lives, and properties in society. Security is always better when provided by the state because all forms of growth and development are rooted in the level at which the government has been able to provide it for the people. The government can achieve this through the efforts of its trained and uncorrupted security force, the use of modern technology, and cooperation with others as national, international, governmental, and non-governmental groups. In this same light, security entails improvement in the socio-economic, health, environmental, and physical conditions of the people; protecting the dominant values, ideology, and way of life of the state from threats and forestalling any form of socio-economic, political, or religious assault on the state. Thus, security is a joint duty of the high level of military interposition and increase in the quality of living of the people (cited in Hassan, 2014).

Insecurity on the other hand becomes a total negation of what security stands for. It is a state of not being protected. Insecurity comes with fear of “what happens next”? “Am I safe”? In support of this assertion, Beland (2005) posited that insecurity is an absence of guard from crime (not being safe) and an absence of freedom from psychological harm (exposed to emotional troubles emanating from unavailability of affirmation that a sense of belonging is offered, has chances and decision to realize his or her ability that is independent (cited in Lipu 2021, p.7). Insecurity in society is characterized by other issues such as kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, hacking, assassination/murder, cultism, rituals, and many alike.

**Kidnapping** is part of an outcome of insecurity in the society. Kidnapping is a global issue; it is a situation of insecurity that is experienced in many parts of the world. It is also understandable that the spate of its occurrence in some countries outweighs others. This crime of kidnapping is carried out when a person is taken hold of and kept in a location not known to the relatives neglecting the person’s fundamental human rights as rightly provided by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Kidnapping by its very nature disrupts order and brings about a decline in security because it is an act of terror.

The phenomena of kidnapping and hostage-taking has not only hindered the socioeconomic progress of southern Nigeria and Nigeria in general, but it has also scared away both international and local investors, which has ultimately resulted in an increase in social vices in Nigeria (Okorie, Nwokeoma & Okpan, 2018).

In the same light, Walsh et al (2019) maintained that kidnapping is an act of crime that comprises taking hold of, keeping in custody, abduction, suppression, applying force, use of threats, terrorism, and enslavement. Therefore, it is the crime of illegal abduction, detention, seizure, and forcefulness, with the absence of regard for the person’s rights. Subsequently, kidnapping can be followed by a demand for ransom and extortion from the relatives of the victim, dismembering of body parts for rituals, assassination, forceful agreements over unsettled matters, and other unauthorized intentions.

### **Political Parties**

A political party is a coalition of men and women who band together to run for office, win them, and take control of the government apparatus. Mclaughlin (2021) defines a political party as a group of men who have come together to work together to advance the national interest based on shared ideals. Institute for Democratic Thought (NDI) (2023) A democracy’s essential institutions are political parties. Put another way, the people use their basic human right to vote and select the representatives that their parties have to provide.

## **Opposition Political Parties**

The various roles of ruling and opposition parties are not exclusive since they are meant to work toward national integration, political development, and societal peace. The understanding of the opposition party is clearer with the definition of the ruling party. A ruling party is the party in power that leads the governance of its state under a democratic system of government. Democracy remains the bedrock since it must have existed before the formation of political parties.

Accordingly, good leadership, fair and legitimate elections, equity, justice, transparency, accountable leadership, accountability, political enlightenment of the general public, respect for the rule of law, and collaboration among various governments are the fundamental components of true democracy (Musa et al., 2020). It is important to remember that in this same pure democracy, the ruling or opposition party is chosen by the results of elections. After defeating the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2015 general election, the All Progressive Congress (APC) now controls all of Nigeria. The PDP and other political parties, including the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), Action Alliance (AA), and Action Peoples Party (APP), are the opposition parties.

In politics, opposition comprises political parties or some arranged sets that are opposed mainly to the ideas of the leadership, party, or groups in control of politics of a city, region, state, country, or other components of politics (Bawn et al, 2012).

Dahl (1989) argues that except for political parties, people won't be able to make choices and once that happens, it will be difficult to exercise their right to who rules them or appeal to their desires (cited in Kiprono, 2020) p. 216.

As stated by Friedman (1999), opposition in politics is the reliable and accepted voice in a state, whose ideas are heeded and holds the leadership to be responsible (p.217).

Rapoo (2004) endorsed that from the practice of more than two parties in the period 1990s the opposition has placed itself as the main competitor with the party in power in most African nations.

By bringing up discomfiting queries and matters concerning government decisions, matters bottling on accountability in government, and deception (p. 217):

Opposition serves as a valuable resource for disgruntled voters, but it also provides information about government policies, highlights their advantages and disadvantages, represents the needs and worries of the people it represents, and facilitates the integration of constituent requests and interests into official policies. As a result, it is untrue that the governing powers' conception of the opposition's function is "to oppose everything and propose nothing." The opposition is fervent in its efforts to hold the government accountable, denounce its actions when necessary, and guarantee that people have options (quoted in Peteremodu, 1985, p. 214).

The free contest between different political parties is a common condition of the new democracy and interest, they carry public quest to the government, they attempt to employ and propose political leadership; and sometimes attempt to follow desirable facts such as social, economic, cultural, and political improvement (Mito, 2002).

## **POLITICAL PARTY**

### **Historical Background**

It is vital in the discussion of the opposition party and the ruling party that an understanding of their foundation is achieved. The Opposition and ruling political party in any society are the outcome of a democratic system of government that allows political parties to exist as a form of exercise of fundamental human rights of political participation. A classical definition of political party came from Edmund Burke. He described the political party as an embodiment of men who have come together

for the development of their pulled efforts, the interest of the nation with special principles to which they have consented (Danjibo et al, 2018). Agbaje (2000) maintained that a “political party is a group of individuals joined together in policies and belief in contribution of general political course which very relevant in the power struggle for the period that democratically feasible, of government and its offices”.

Political parties in Nigeria have their evolutionary path. The very first political party in Nigeria was the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). The NNDP was formed in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay. The NNDP creation was facilitated due to the Nigerian Legislature which provided franchise (right to vote) to Lagos and Calabar under Clifford’s constitution (Cited in Danjibo et al, 2018, p. 1). Other political parties after Macaulay’s NNDP in 1923 came before Nigeria’s independence (Daudu, Osimen & Ameh, 2024). The National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) was originally formed to be a national party but was later positioned as a party for the eastern region. The Action Group (AG) became a party for the Western Region Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) was for the Northern region (Danjibo et al, 2015). On the same regional basis, the parties have their different leadership; Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe for NCNC, Chief SLA Akintola for AG, and Sir Ahmadu Bello for NPC.

The early political parties after independence were characterized by crises that imposed insecurity in society. The three major electoral crises; 1. Federal election crisis 2. Western election crisis of 1965, and 3. Action Group crisis of 1962 had crises that embodied ruling and opposition. They later resulted in an escalated crisis that led to insecurity at the time:

The election results point to a major conflict between the NPC (the Northern Region) and the NCNC (the Eastern Region), similar to the dispute over the 1962 and 1963 censuses. There was a political standstill in the country as a result of the dispute between the NNA and the UPGA on the validity of the election results. President Azikiwe, an Ibo and NCNC, was unable to contact the Prime Minister four days after the elections to organise a leadership based on the results (Peteromodu, 1985, p. 137).

Since independence, political parties have persisted under various configurations. Parties include the Peoples’ Redemption Party (PRP), National Advance Party (NAP), Great National Party of Nigeria (GNPN), National Peoples’ Party (NPP), and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) existed throughout the Second Republic. With the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), a two-party system that primarily sought to bring the nation together and integrate it, the third Republic came to an end.

Merkl (1977) asserts that political parties bear the responsibility for carrying out tasks like

- (a) selecting and recruiting candidates for public office.
- (b) Creating policies and programmes for the government.
- (c) Oversight and management of the governmental apparatus.
- (d) Social integration achieved by providing a shared ideology or belief system or by satisfying and resolving collective demands.
- (e) Individuals' social integration through socialisation and the mobilisation of assistance (cited in Olowojolu, 2015, p.1).

Political parties function as a go-between the public and the government and play many other important functions in the political system, they are the embodiment that puts together public opinion.

Rakner & Nicolas (2009) maintain that political parties in opposition and their stand in the national legislature a key units in the plans of democratization and good leadership (cited in Kiprono, 2020, p.14).

## METHODOLOGY

The study approach used in the report is qualitative. The method of data collection was secondary sources, which included information from books, journals, newspapers, and internet sites. Easton's Systems theory (analytical) framework was used to augment the paper's descriptive examination of the data, key problems, and themes. These strengthened the study's debates, topics, results, and suggestions. This paper's major contention is that, because the opposition party places a greater emphasis on combating insurgency and insecurity in the nation, efforts by the government to provide basic services to the populace have been hampered by their direct or indirect connection to instability.

The background causes of insecurity in the country and the diversion of the government's attention are presented in the themes. The paper concluded that opposition has contributed to insecurity and the weakness of the government. Recommendations in this paper will help the government develop the best strategies for fighting insecurity and insurgency while meeting the compulsory duties of providing deserved services to the citizens of the country.

### Theoretical Framework

System theory serves as the foundation for this study's analysis and reasoning. Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, a German scientist, is credited with developing systems theory. A scientist named Ludwig von Bertalanffy presented his systems theory at a University of Chicago philosophy seminar in the 1930s. Bertalanffy was a biologist who pioneered the study of systems theory in the biological sciences, which subsequently evolved into the field of ecology. According to Bertalanffy, knowledge cannot be obtained by taking away a component of what gives a system its unique function (Heil, 2018, p. 3).

The objectives of the theory were explained as follows:

(1) The various scientific and social sciences exhibit a general tendency towards unification. It seems that a broad theory of systems must centre around this unity. (3) In the nonphysical branches of science, this kind of theory could be a useful tool for addressing the true theory. This theory moves us closer to the goal of the unification of science by establishing integrating tenets that run "vertically" through the domain of the separate disciplines. (5) This may lead to the hoped-for unification in science instruction (Von Bertalanffy, 1968, cited in Laszlo et al, 1998, P. 1)

David Easton expanded and popularised the social science and political analysis concept known as "system theory." The gold standard of political analysis is system analysis, which describes how a political system survives by converting inputs—demands and supports—into outputs—authoritative decisions that satisfy the majority of the populace (cited in Hassan, 2014, p. 11).

The theory emphasizes analyzing the interactions between elements and impacts that stabilize or destabilize the political system and this interaction between various parts helps in understanding the whole system from its input to its output. It stresses the duties completed by system units as the system reacts to environmental quests. In system theory, the disordering or differences in the environment will push the system to react and make amends to ensure a state of equilibrium assured by the four functions of actions; adaptation, goal attainment, pattern maintenance, and integration, needed to maintain a system's existence, effectiveness, and the system's goal of seeking equilibrium (Chih-Hui et al, 2017):

The political system that is part of the Eastonian structure is an input-output process that deals with political decisions and performs the uniting and sustaining tasks necessary for the system to last. Thus, maintaining the sustainability and longevity of the political system as well as its capacity to overcome inevitable disruptions and hitches depend on striking a balance between its input and

output variables. Nonetheless, the system will lose support if authoritative judgements anger a large enough portion of its members (Cited in Hassan, 2014).

In application to this study, the systems theory stresses a system with an input and output within an environment in Nigeria. The complexity of the components visible in this study is the opposition and the ruling party, the insurgent groups, the militants, bandits, terrorists, kidnappers, and others alike. The balance of security in this light of systems theory largely depends on the ability of the ruling party to harness the different component units in the system. The increasing spate of kidnapping being an output cannot be unconnected with the input in the ruling party which encompasses their efforts in job creation, tackling the menace, their total package of good governance, the promotion of moral values in the society which negates the culture of 'get rich which' that has permeated among the citizens of the country. If it has increased this period, what were the measures that have been used to tackle it? Akpan (2010) claims that the current wave of kidnappings in Nigeria started on February 25, 2006, when foreign workers from oil companies were abducted from the Niger Delta region. This event served as a stark warning to the world after years of deceit, injustice, oppression, exploitation, and downgrading of the area.

In the form of consequences and output of a system, ruling political parties and their opposition, have refused to put hands together in solving insurgents' precarious state, rather they blame each other for being the master minder of the situation. This blame and accusations have led to the creation of what was called 'conspiracy theories' which embody the origin of Boko Haram and the roles of the ruling party and former president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan instituting Boko Haram to discredit the opposition counterparts.

It has become a consequence now because the people in governance (ruling PDP and the main opposition APC) refused to work together in finding solutions, get involved in the fight, and act in politics with the delicate matters of Boko Haram insurgency, heaping blame and accusing each other of being the cause.

Once a ruling party fails in its responsibility of securing lives and property, and providing at least, basic welfare services to its people, it can lead to discontent among the people, an increase in the channels of opposition, and possibly arms-taking against the government. Under this unfavorable condition of insecurity, the entire system in its complex nature is thereby affected. The inability of the Nigerian leaders long after independence to evolve a nation out of a multiplicity of ethnic nationalities in the state mainly defines the hazardous state of security in the country (Hassan, 2014). Whatever crisis a group, state, or country goes through, the application of management skills toward a solution to problems is paramount (Osimen, Daudu & Awogu-Maduagwu, 2023). In this light, systems theory comprises crisis management and this is achieved with the understanding of the dynamic stakeholders that are part of examining the details of what happened before, how the crisis was managed helped organizations to create better foresight and crisis management strategies thereby bringing back trust in the people. (Laszlo et al, 1998).

The system theory is not without criticism as other scholars have studied it and discovered the limitations that come with it; Spronck et al (1987) in their criticism of systems theory submitted that Some system therapists reject the systemic view for various reasons, often related to violence, victimization, and power. Strauss (2002) was comprehensive in his criticism of the systems theory picking out its claim on centrality:

A system's multifaceted character highlights the fact that it is unable to serve as both a modal point of entry and a comprehensive explanation. However, systems theory failed to fully break away from an over-extension of the spatial whole parts relation. This deficiency can be addressed by investigating the more insightful alternative principle of sphere-sovereignty and the theory of entoptic interlacements that it implies (P.178).



The systems theory though has been well criticized but it remains a vital theory that can be used to analyze a discussion of this nature that embodies component groups such as political parties, insurgents, kidnappers, and other opposing and frustrating efforts of the government. To demonstrate the applicability of systems theory, Stichweh (n.d.) connected it to Talcott Parsons and Niklas Luhmann as a desirable sociological archetype because of its universalistic feature. This allowed for the conception of a multifaceted approach to the analysis of social systems, which in the variety of theoretical approaches it provided, promised to be applied to the entire range of issues required for sociology (Osimen, et al., 2024).

Notable scholars have applied Systems theory in their analysis; Bridgen, (2020) in his work, "Using Systems Theory to Understand the Identity of Academic Advising: A Case Study" comes to the conclusion that systemic problems prolong and exacerbate a culture of prescriptive advising at Mid-Atlantic University (MAU), not a lack of scholarship on normative theory or vague goals and objectives, are to blame for the lack of guidance or uncertainty surrounding the provision of advice. However, Hassan (2014) concludes in his paper, "Boko Haram Insurgency and the Spate of Insecurity in Nigeria: Manifestation of Governance Crisis," that there is a strong correlation between the rise in insecurity in Nigeria and the crisis of governance, as evidenced by the ruling class's inability to create and implement policies that don't appeal to the state's irritated populace and instead favour violence.

### **CAUSES OF INSECURITY (INSURGENCY AND KIDNAPPING)**

**Political marginalization:** This has had social implications that embody the insecurity and lawful cover for southern and displaced Darfurian and day labourers performing in the North since they are not permitted representation to protect their level. In the same style of marginalization, it has been widely acknowledged that 'many staff of the Commission are card-carrying members of the ruling party (Kura, 2017, p. 87). This single fact leads to a loss of confidence in all activities of the commission (INEC) and possibly leads to alternative/illegal ways of taking overpower.

In the case of Darfur, political domineering has played a vital role as well. Although part of the North, Darfur has majorly been denied taking part in national politics, while its political and economic desires have long been neglected (Chukwudi, Osimen, Dele-Dada, Ahmed,2024). The recent crisis in the region has worsened mainly due to violent attacks and social division (Maha, 2023).

The crisis of high levels of poverty, joblessness, and decay in infrastructure, endemic corruption, ethno-religious crises, politically caused violence, and general insecurity tormenting the country stresses the governance crisis in the polity (Hassan, 2014, p.11).

**Kidnapping as a Political Tool:** Most Kidnap cases are attributed to the political interest of the opposing group. As they struggle for power, some believe that it will be more profitable if opposition candidates are abducted, assassinated, threatened, and intimidated only going on to power.

By the political end, it means that the fight for power and state resources is achievable by the contest and strategic opposition.

Kidnapping has before been a characteristic of political terrorism where ransom, assassination, and all radicalism are applied (Campbell, 2019). In support of the assertion, highly placed government figures and politicians sometimes relate with criminals, offering them the needed guard and boldness to carry out violent crimes in society (Maxwell, 2011).

With regards to police records, 685 kidnap cases took place in the first quarter of this year, which equates to an average of seven per day and the culprits ask for ransom that falls between \$1,000 to \$150,000 (Obaigbena, 2019).

**Unemployment:** A lot of able-bodied young men and women are unengaged in any type of work, and this makes them engage in some dirty activities through joining illegal or banned groups to foment trouble in the country thereby increasing the spate of insecurity.

Instead of interacting with and participating in political parties, many young people in the region have continued their political activism through "political movements" since the Arab Awakening (UNDP, 2019). Ibrahim et al. (2020) have identified the get-rich syndrome, youth unemployment, and the effect of hard drugs as contributing factors to horrific crimes like kidnapping.

**Prolonged Era Military Regime:** The period of military rule embodies various kinds of crisis. The abuse of human rights, citizens' protests, and the proliferation of light arms were very common in our society. The availability and easy accessibility of these instruments of battle have made many of our young ones engage in crime as they belong to cult groups, are involved in drug addiction, and are vulnerable in the hands of politicians as they can be used to attack opposition members whom they see as threats to their success, with that belief of being equipped. With that situation, insecurity continues to escalate. The period would have been enough to build and develop a sustainable democracy, but it was rather wasted under the military without democratic value.

**Incapacitated Security System:** This unarguable fact remains that the security outfits existing in the country are ill-equipped which can be a result of low finances and a lack of modern security gadgets. Historically, terrorists have gained access to numerous federal government establishments, kidnap in secondary, bombed at independence-day celebrations, invasion of military barracks, and most recently invasion of Kaduna Airports

The argument is posited that going with a population of almost 200 million citizens policed by 371,800 policemen, Nigeria is under-policed (Obaigbena, 2019). This means that Nigeria is not adequately policed, and it is difficult to combat crime and maintain peace and security in the country.

**The porous Nature of the Nigerian border** has always been identified as a type that is not well guarded mainly due to the high level of unchecked exit and entrance (Kabir, 2020). The bad management of the Nigerian border is a practice that brings about an outcome of insecurity in the system. The corrupt officials as actors in the system have not helped in solving but worsening the spate of insecurity in the country (Osimen, Fulani, Chidozie, & Dada, 2024). Terrorists from neighboring countries cross into Nigeria without any form of check or crossing into other countries without any form of tracking.

### **Opposition parties and Insecurity**

In weak democracies, the military has 'been neck deep in politics, sometimes victimize society rather than guarding it.' It is common in Africa to have the party in power that assures loyalty to the military through a biased system of employment, payment, and denial to ensure its long-lasting politics (Mesfin, 2008, p. 5). In various conduct of elections, the opposition also makes illegal use of the military in providing security, intimidating the opposition, and manipulating the outcome of the elections. Different eras of elections in Nigeria do have information peculiar to them. Complete information and the 2019 general elections include:

(a) Political players, their allies, and political thugs controlling and intimidating INEC regular and temporary employees, voters, and observers at polling places. (a) The kidnapping of INEC employees, both regular and temporary, in the states of Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Imo, Katsina, Kogi, and Rivers. (c) Seizing and igniting electoral materials, as well as stuffing ballot boxes. (d) Disorganisation of results collation operations at result collation locations, including premeditated targeting of electoral staff en route to work, as occurred in the states of Akwa Ibom, Delta, Rivers, and Zamfara; these incidents occurred due to disruptions with the collation procedures. (e) Property damage or disruption, including INEC offices in the Plateau, Anambra, and Ebonyi States. (f) Overuse of force during election

day, particularly in the states of Akwa Ibom, Imo, and Rivers; examples include "incidents of military personnel chasing away observers and some party agents." (g) Using hate speech as a kind of psychological violence, deceiving people with false information can advise and provoke visible crises and social unrest during election seasons (Cited in Adewale et al, 2019, p. 12).

Ruling parties always have strategies used without restraint; for example, the PDP in establishing authoritarian one-party democracy is: (i) controlling and undermining other institutions of democracy such as INEC and the judiciary, (ii) creating factions within opposition parties, (iii) attempting constitutional reform for a third term, (iv) employing electoral malpractices, (v) using EFCC to harass, intimidate and exclude other party candidates in the democratic process, and (vi) making use of ethnoreligious manipulations (Kura, 2017 P.86)

These opposition parties are, well open to handling suppression and it is not the same with other African countries. In the like manner, they continued in their loss of strength as it regards total submission to responsible leaders with no interest in grabbing their share from the national resources...unsatisfactory ideological orientation and programmatic appeal, chronic factionalism, lack of systematic count of members who are few, lack of fund, inaccessibility of media and disintegration among themselves (Cited in Mesfin, 2008, p. 8). Heaping blame on the opposition is among the strategies applied by ruling political parties.

President Jonathan's speech during the PDP 65th NEC meeting on June 5, 2014, did expose the trading of blame and accusations on the insecurity matters that have posed a challenge to the nation. In his speech at the meeting, the President stated, "Most of our PDP states are doing well. Insecurity problems are not pronounced in PDP states due to the commitments of the governors" (Cited in Hassan, 2014: 11).

There are two conspiracy theories commonly used by politicians in the analysis of the cause of Boko Haram (an Islamic insurgent and terrorist group based in the North):

(A) To make the nation "ungovernable" for President Goodluck Jonathan, Northern politicians finance Boko Haram. (b) In advance of the 2015 presidential election, President Jonathan finances Boko Haram with the intention of either enlisting the aid of Christians and the South, or destabilising and diminishing the North (p. 33).

As positioned by the first theory, the Hausa/Fulani believe they are entitled to oversee the country. They became dissatisfied seeing a Christian in power and they resolved to fund Boko Haram to destabilize the country under President Jonathan's administration. The second theory submitted that Boko Haram is funded by President Jonathan's administration to present Islam with a bad image and prove that they are not capable of handling the country's presidency even as they try to pull his administration down (Chukwudi, et al, 2024). This would indicate the way he has decided to gather the support of his Christian brethren from the South for his leadership. In its alternative, the theory held that the funding of Boko Haram was championed by the government to destroy and reduce the strength and population of the northern region before the 2015 general election. Several adored Northern leaders such as the governor of Adamawa state, Murtala Nyako, and the governor of Sokoto state, Alhaji Aliyu Wamakko, accepted this theory openly showing their belief in it (Kimenyi et al, 2014). All these assertions are indications that opposition to government can cause crises through their activities, beliefs, and utterances.

### **More Affected Areas with Security Challenges in Nigeria**

Different parts of Nigeria are commonly known for incidences of insecurities and insurgencies which range from harder-farmer crises, kidnappings, and political killings, to ritual killings.

The Nextier Violent Conflict Database presented tracked data in 2021 showing that Zamfara state appeared as the most violent state in Nigeria, recording 848 deaths with several seventy-one (71)

occurrences, and Kaduna and Borno states fell next in line with 550 and 481 deaths, respectively. (Reliefweb, 2022). Many parts of the country have become highly unsafe:

Benue and Niger remained unshaken since the 2021 report as the topmost violent states in Nigeria with 20,012 kidnappings, Plateau state is not spared as they made the list in 2022, the scary ‘unknown gunmen’ (UGM) and different discontent/groups, and the alleged violence of self-determination agitators have worsened insecurity in southeastern Nigeria (Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Abia state. The Niger Delta Militancy sparked by the question of resource control and the neglect of the of the oil-producing areas that have suffered as a result of damaging oil spillage (Reliefweb, 2022)

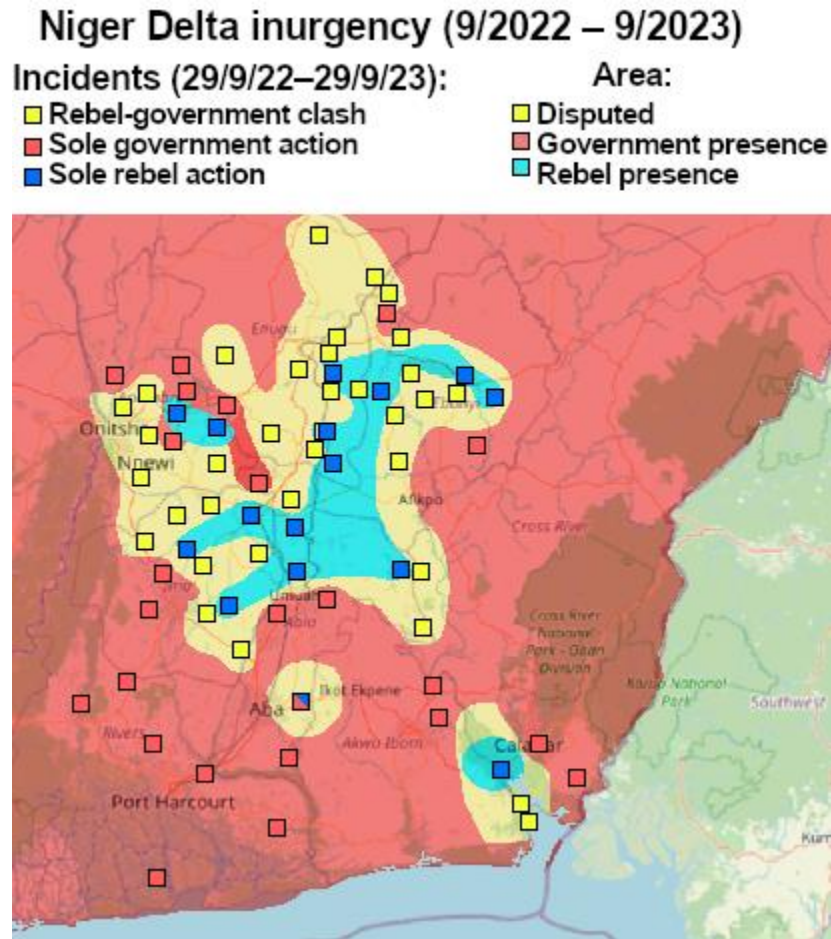
The map shown here in Figure 1. has helped to indicate those parts of northern Nigeria with high levels of Boko Haram-caused insecurity and insurgency.



Figure 1

Source: Jabes (2021).

Over a year, consistent violent attacks have occurred, especially in Anambra and Imo states. Niger Delta militancy and gang wars in south-south and southwest regions require tailored combative and non-combative responses.



**Figure 2**

Source: Wikipedia (2021).

The map in Figure 2 indicates those volatile areas with insecurity and insurgency in the southeastern region.

The role of opposition parties has been stated concerning the worrisome situation. The Conspiracy theories earlier stated in this work have linked the insecurity and insurgency in Nigeria to the then ruling party of President Goodluck Jonathan and their then APC opposition party with the origin of the deadliest terrorist group known as Boko Haram. Though this allegation was discredited it has remained a worrisome condition in Nigerian society.

Despite all odds around insecurity and insurgency, the fight against it has continued.

**The Fight against Insurgency and Kidnapping**

The government must embrace modern technological instruments in the fight against the multiple causes of insecurity in our country. In this conformity:

**Usman Alkali Baba currently serving as the Inspector-General of Police (IGP) has obtained more compelling Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) numbering five to better the monitoring**

**of the environment to put criminal actions properly check by the IGP's stated plans which comprise technology-driven policing (Adejobi, 2022).**

Right from the inception of terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria, the government has planned various strategies that will put a stop to the activities of Boko Haram. The most important is the use of fierce military power in attacking insurgent groups and deploying not less than 8000 troops into places affected in northern Nigeria, but without well stated Military Code of Justice for the action (Adedire et al, 2016). The visible battling activities of the men of the military do show them as men with lots of effort in their battle:

The African Union's recent authorization, the battle to acquire and enhance the most advanced, sufficient, and optimal military equipment, and the breaches of a broad-based foreign coalition to collaborate with our armed forces have all contributed to the military's improvement. There is the international community's agreement that permits bordering nations (Chad, Niger, and Cameroon) to lawfully station military forces on Nigerian territory. The Nigerian military searches across borders for escaping terrorists in order to deny them a place to hide. In addition, a state of emergency has been declared in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe, the three northern states most affected (Adedire et al, 2016).

The input in the fight against insecurity seems incomplete when looking at Khalid's (2021) contributions in his paper where he provided six facts about why Boko Haram has not been overpowered: root causes not addressed, Boko Haram's ability to recruit, Lack of equipment, Corruption, Military strategy not working, and Boko Haram's influence continuous spreading. Similarly, as part of his recommendations, Jerome (2015) gave these as solutions to insurgency, fixing the Army, waging war on decadence as a priority, financing counterinsurgency, and dissenting the conventional military-centric approach. Appropriate punishment should part of the measures against the perpetrators of the crime (Chidozie & Joshua, 2015; Aluko, Apeloko, OChukwudi, & Paimo, 2023).

In the same light of the fight against insurgency, Ahmadu Jaha, a member of the House of Representatives, contributing to a motion sponsored by Haruna Mshelia, who called for improved security in Mandiragrau, Askira and Garkida communities in Borno says the Nigerian Army needs to go on the offensive to win the war against insurgency (Akpan, 2021). The Nigerian government has shown it did not fold its hands but will need to do more:

Nigeria has made several attempts since 2012 to combat the Boko Haram threat, but its measures have so far been largely ineffective. Initially, the defence budget was increased from N396.5 billion (\$2.56 billion) in 2012 to N968.127 billion (\$5.69 billion) in 2014. The fight against Boko Haram provided the rationale for a large portion of this increase. The National Assembly granted the Federal Government a \$1 billion external loan in September 2014 so that it could improve the security agencies' and Armed Forces' tactics, equipment, and training to take on the rebels with greater vigour. A state of emergency in the Northeast, strengthening the military's and other security services' capabilities, pursuing talks with the rebels, enacting anti-terrorism laws, and initiating military operations against the group are among other tactics (Jerome, 2015, p.101).

Apart from the real fight, the government has not abandoned those displaced because of the crises of insecurity. In all refugee camps for those who had the knowledge and fled the terrorist attacks, some forms of material relief, religious, and or psychological counseling are availed by the government and non-government agencies and individuals to assist victims recuperating from and adapt to mental and physical pains and agonies suffered because of exposures because of the insurgency (Granville, 2020, p.142). The fight is a continual process and needs to be handled very well by men of the military with the support of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Many governmental activities do suffer from the fear of insecurity, such as general elections in the country (Daudu, Osimen, & Shuaibu ,2023).

In modern democracies, election days are not special days because, with the voting process going on, people continue to go about their normal business. In the case of Nigeria, days of elections are tagged 'days of violence', they are days of calamities that people need to be extra cautious about.

Election days are when men of security agencies are sent to strategic places to guard and prevent outbreaks of violence (Kura, 2017, P. 89).

Apart from providing security, there is a need to sanction those that violate electoral rules ... stop self-serving alterations of the legal and institutional structure of the elections, and assure avenues for political players and civil society to participate meaningfully in the electoral procedure... remove tension, such as controversy over outcome of elections by providing a channel where the contending parties can fight out their battles using the help of their lawyers (cited in Mesfin, 2008, p. 4).

The opposition and the government in power cannot be dissociated from the experienced insecurity in the society. Subaru (2006) maintains that the state or the government in power, Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP) has the legal capacity to also use the police and even INEC to terminate its opposing powers towards its one-party plans. In uprooting the opposition through violence, the tactics of intimidation, arbitrary arrest, arson, politically encouraged protests, threats, abductions, and outright murder were well used. It is also noted that the security agents are used to stop opposition from holding their meetings or demonstrations. These procedures do not respect the principles of democracy where equality and freedom are well stated. The level of this PDP-caused violence, instability, and general uncertainties clouded the eight years of the Obasanjo regime (Kura, 2017 84-85). The spate of insecurity has continued to go higher with callous political killings.

The murders of Chief Bola Ige, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Harry Marshal, and other well-known opposition party leaders are among the most horrific of these political executions. The majority of those killed belonged to opposition parties, and the majority of the deceased were significant political leaders whose presence may undermine the PDP's one-party plan or held crucial positions within their organisations. Regretfully, not only have the killings not been thoroughly investigated but the perpetrators have not even been brought to justice (Kura, 2017 P. 85).

The parties in power when fighting the opposition make use of all the rules available in the book to bring down acceptance with the use of media outlets and machinery of the state to present them as a group of hungry people. In the fight against dictatorship, as demonstrated in, among other places, Zimbabwe, Burundi, and Uganda, the opposition never backs down in the face of mistreatment. Opposition parties have used the electoral process to overthrow the ruling party in a few nations. For example, in Malawi in 2020, Kenya in 2002, Zambia in 1991 and 2011, and Somalia in 1967, the opposition overthrew the governing party. This is a noteworthy move that will strengthen institutions and advance democratic principles across the continent (Kiprono, 2020, p. 217). The outcome will undoubtedly be favourable if good efforts are used and everyone pitches in to combat instability.

## **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

In conclusion, the rise in the incidents of insecurity and insurgency is impacted in some ways by disorganization between the opposition and the ruling party. the lack of cooperation between the ruling party and the opposition party has caused disequilibrium in the society. In this direction, the systems theory perspective posits that equilibrium is achieved once there is a balance in the interaction between the components and units in the system. In other words, there is no visible integration between the various players as, the ruling party, opposition, and discontent groups like insurgents, kidnappers, and other criminals. This situation has led the opposition to partake in insecurity just makes leadership uncomfortable for those in power. Instead of proper communication as a way out of insecurity, what is obtainable remains continuous marginalization, oppression, and victimization thereby increasing the spate of insecurity, insurgency, and

kidnappings. To have a secured Nigeria, all hands must be on deck. A united effort of all component units is required. The habit of do-or-die politics must be frowned upon by all. Lawmakers should ensure that all aspects of electoral offenses have commensurate punishment that awaits it.

The accommodation of opposition political parties by the ruling party as a 'watchdog' and their cooperation can further be improved through peace awareness, National Conferences, and all strategies for finding peace.

Political parties should endeavor to practice internal democracy within their structures, and obedience to rules and regulations is always upheld. The interest of the public must be made paramount by those in power to encourage participation, respect for fundamental human rights, and avoidance of disorderliness or creating dissenting groups that can work towards insecurity in society. In this form, there will be linking of the demands of every citizen and diverse groups to political agendas, and in forming institutionalized government and effective opposition.

Security agents should be better equipped to tackle the rising spates of insecurity in the country.

As a result of the international outlook of some terrorist operatives, there is a great need to use the international dimension in the fight against insecurity in the country. Provision of employment for school leavers, and university graduates and assuring enabling environment for both private and public businesses and organizations. With these practices, security will surely be entrenched, and dividends of democracy will be enjoyed as an embodiment of security.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are profoundly grateful to the Covenant University Centre for Research, Innovation, and Discovery (CUCRID) for funding this publication.

## DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors do not have any form of conflicting interests.

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